

July 28, 2020

Cecile Young, Executive Commissioner

Health & Human Services Commission

REQUEST TO OPEN FACILITIES, NURSING HOMES AND STATE FACILITIES

Commissioner Young,

First, I would like to thank you for thoughtfully considering my proposal.

My name is Sherry McClung. I am a retired Lufkin ISD teacher, 73 years old. My husband is Gene McClung. He is a retired maintenance engineer from Land O' Pines, 78 years old.

My husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer disease several years ago. He is currently in Wells LTC Rehab and Nursing Home facility.

We have been married for 32 years. We were unable to celebrate together as many other couples, due to the closure of all facilities.

Am sure you're aware of the hardship this causes and the results of no human touch on the vulnerable and their loved ones. As for my husband and myself, we have no family members living close by; therefore, both of us have not had physical touch or hugs from anyone for the last 5 months. Isolation along with no human touch has been tested time and time again demonstrating the loss of life.

A recent study, May 2020 showed people isolated socially are 50 percent more likely to die from any cause than those with strong relationships and touch.

Visiting my husband at the window has been quite difficult in the Texas heat and humidity. While visiting at the window, Gene tells me, "You just don't want me anymore." After being his only stability for many years due to Alzheimer's disease, it is difficult for him to grasp why I can't be in his room or go on an outing for coffee as we did five months ago. This is detrimental to his health and mental/emotional stability. Five months is too long for those mentally challenged in State Schools, as well. It has also been too long for me.

I am not coming to you with a complete list of problems, as I'm sure you are well aware of the strain, depression and anxiety this separation has caused everyone with loved ones in facilities.

I COME WITH A PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE FROM THE OPENING OF ALL FACILITIES.

Commissioner Young, I've given a great deal of thought to this situation.

I respectfully submit my proposal, line by line to reopen the doors safely for everyone, including a Protocol method.

PROTOCOL

1. Facilities, Nursing Homes and State Schools **MUST** be COVID free for a continuous 6 weeks before they can open to family members.
2. Family members (those that contact facility as the primary caregiver to visit) must take a COVID test and self-isolate until receive results.

Set-Up:

1. Only one family member will be allowed to visit loved one (at this time).
2. Each Nursing Home decides on the percentage of visitors at one time, depending on capacity of filled beds.
3. Care facility calls the designated family member and gives them the day and time they may visit. It may be once or twice a month or more often (depending on the nursing home). Keeping in mind, some family members may be working and can only visit certain times/days.
4. Residents sharing a room would meet outdoors in a designated area or have an option of meeting in a particular room with their family member, chosen by nursing home and the room would be sanitized in between visits.
5. Residents in a room by themselves would be allowed to have their loved one come into their room.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

- FAMILY WILL BE TESTED BEFORE ENTERING, AS STAFF MEMBERS ARE TESTED
- GLOVES, MASKS, GOWNS WILL BE PROVIDED BY NURSING HOMES (ENSURING FAMILY MEMBER IS NOT WEARING OLD MASK AND GLOVES).
- MASK **MUST COVER NOSE AND MOUTH**
- MEMBER ALLOWED IN ROOM WILL WEAR PROTECTIVE GEAR DURING ENTIRE VISIT AND REMAIN IN RESIDENT'S ROOM.
- DOOR TO ROOM WILL REMAIN OPEN FOR STAFF TO OBSERVE
- RESIDENT WILL WEAR MASK ENTIRE VISIT
- THOSE VISITING OUTDOORS WILL FOLLOW SAME PROCEDURE

- FACILITY ANNOUNCES VISITING HOURS ARE OVER, FAMILY MEMBER PROCEEDS TO EXIT AND DROPS GOWN IN A LAUNDRY BASKET BY DOOR. MASK AND GLOVES DROPPED IN WASTE CAN.
- RESIDENTS HEALTHY ENOUGH AND PREVIOUSLY GIVEN OUTING PRIVILEGES, WOULD BE QUARANTINED WHEN RETURN TO FACILITY.

Thank you, Commissioner Young, for your time and support of this proposal.

Respectfully,

Sherry McClung

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